

Message Text

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: OVIP (DAVIS, NATHANIEL), PFOR, XA, LI

SUBJECT: DAVIS-TOLBERT MEETING

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

1. SUMMARY. ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAVIS CALLED ON LIBERIAN PRESIDENT TOLBERT MAY 7. AFTER WARM, PERSONAL WELCOME, DISCUSSION RANGED OVER GENERAL AFRICAN TOPICS, INCLUDING SOUTHERN AFRICA, TOLBERT'S MEETING WITH VORSTER AND BILATERAL MATTERS, INCLUDING AID LEVELS, MILITARY SALES, US INVESTMENT AND GENERAL STATE OF SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LIBERIA AND US. END SUMMARY.

2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAVIS MET WITH PRESIDENT TOLBERT AT EXECUTIVE MANSION FOR MORE THAN ONE HOUR MAY 7. (FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS, AMBASSADOR-TO-US PEAL AND MINISTER OF STATE FOR PRESIDENTIAL AFFAIRS WERE ALSO PRESENT.) MEETING BEGAN WITH PRESS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS PRESENT. DAVIS CONVEYED CONDOLENCES ON RECENT DEATH OF HIS BROTHER, FINANCE MINISTER STEPHEN TOLBERT, REFERRING TO LONGSTANDING, HISTORIC,
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SPECIAL TIES BETWEEN US AND LIBERIA. TOLBERT RESPONDED,

WELCOMING DAVIS AS QTE MY FRIEND UNQTE AND SOMEONE WHOM HE HAD BEEN ANXIOUS TO MEET. TOLBERT ADDED THAT US-LIBERIA TIES WERE MATTER OF HISTORY, MADE OF EVENTS, RECORDS AND MEMORY. PRESIDENT DISMISSED PRESS AT THAT POINT.

3. TOLBERT THEN INQUIRED AFTER PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER, EXPRESSING PLEASURE AT HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT DURING HIS OCTOBER 1974 VISIT TO US. HE PRAISED THE PRESIDENT'S QTE SINCERITY IN HIS DETERMINATION TO DO WHAT COULD BE DONE FOR AFRICA AND THE WORLD UNQTE. HE SAID HE HOPED FOR QTE COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING UNQTE AT THIS TIME, THAT THE US UNDERSTAND AND BE UNDERSTOOD, ON ALL SIDES. DAVIS RESPONDED, EMPHASIZING OUR DESIRE TO BUILD UPON AND IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH AFRICA, CITING PRESIDENT FORD'S STATE OF WORLD ADDRESS, SECRETARY KISSINGER'S REMARKS AT MEETING WITH AFRICAN AMBASSADORS, AT DAVIS SWEARING-IN, ETC.

4. SOUTHERN AFRICA: DAVIS NOTED REMARKS OF LIBERIAN FOREIGN MINISTER DURING VISIT TO LIBERIA OF ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KIFLE, PRAISING US-BRITISH-FRENCH TRIPARTITE APPROACH TO SOUTH AFRICA ON NAMIBIA. DAVIS ALSO NOTED TOLBERT'S FEBRUARY 11-12 MEETING WITH SA PRIME MINISTER VORSTER, PLACING BOTH EFFORTS WITHIN CONTEXT OF ATTEMPTS TO BRING ABOUT PEACEFUL EVOLUTION OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROBLEM AND ASKING TOLBERT'S VIEWS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA. TOLBERT PRAISED PRESIDENT FORD'S CONCERN OVER SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROBLEMS. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT SOME AFRICAN LEADERS WERE NOT QUITE CONVINCED THAT US SHARED ASPIRATIONS FOR QTE TOTAL LIBERATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND HUMAN DIGNITY UNQTE. HE HIMSELF UNDERSTOOD, BUT COULD NOT HELP BEING IMPATIENT IN THESE MATTERS. DAVIS RESPONDED BY CITING SECRETARY KISSINGER'S ASSURANCE TO AFRICAN AMBASSADORS THAT THE US PLANNED NO DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT WITH SOUTH AFRICA, THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT IN THE KAUNDA TOAST WELCOMING THE INDEPENDENCE OF FORMER PORTUGUESE TERRITORIES, ADMINISTRATION EFFORTS ON REPEAL OF BYRD AMENDMENT, AND MAINTENANCE SINCE 1963 OF ARMS EMBARGO AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA AS CLEAR SIGNS THAT AFRICANS AND US WERE NOT FAR APART ON THESE QUESTIONS.

5. VORSTER MEETING: TOLBERT URGED US NOT TO SACRIFICE OTHER FRIENDS (AFRICAN NATIONS) FOR ONE FRIEND (SOUTH AFRICA). HE SAID
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HE HIMSELF HAD FAVORED EXPULSION OF SOUTH AFRICA FROM UN AS QTE BEST WAY TO GET SOUTH AFRICA TO RESPOND UNQTE, BUT UNDERSTOOD US RESPONSIBILITY TO WORLD COMMUNITY IN EXERCISING VETO AND NOW UP TO US TO HELP FIND A FORMULA FOR MAINTAINING PRESSURE ON SA. HE SAID HE HAD MADE CLEAR TO VORSTER IN THEIR TALKS THAT APARTHEID MUST BE STOPPED BUT THAT HE HAD MADE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERNAL SITUATION AND NAMIBIA WHERE ACTION MUST BE IMMEDIATE. DAVIS PRAISED TOLBERT'S WILLINGNESS TO TAKE

LEADERSHIP IN SEEKING PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO SOUTHER AFRICAN PROBLEMS.

6. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: TOLBERT TURNED TO OTHER AFRICAN PROBLEMS, INCLUDING PURSUIT OF HUMAN DIGNITY, NEED FOR QTE ECONOMIC LIBERATION UNQTE THROUGH PLANNING, REGIONAL COOPERATION, AND MORE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, AND REFERRED TO SECRETARY KISSINGER'S REMARKS IN THIS VEIN AT DAVIS' SWEARING-IN. DAVIS RESPONDED BY NOTING GENERAL CONSTRAINTS ON LEVELS OF AID AT THIS TIME OF US DOMESTIC ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BUT ADDING THAT OUR ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA SEEMED TO CONTINUE TO BUCK WORLDWIDE TREND TOWARD REDUCTIONS. SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM HAD BEEN MAINTAINED, INCLUDING 4 MILLION DLRS INCREASE THIS FISCAL YEAR. DAVIS ALSO INFORMED TOLBERT OF AUTHORIZED 1.8 MILLION DLRS IN FMS CREDITS WHICH WOULD PERMIT LIBERIA TO PURCHASE BADLY NEEDED COAST GUARD VESSELS AND OTHER ITEMS, ALBEIT LESS THAN ORIGINAL 2.5 MILLION DLRS. LIBERIAN GRANT REQUEST. TOLBERT INTERRUPTED, EXPRESSING HIS PLEASURE AND ADDING QTE THANK GOD FOR AGOOD MOUTHFUL EVEN IF NOT A FULL MEAL. UNQTE. DAVIS THEN COMPLIMENTED TOLBERT ON SUCCESS OF HIS EFFORTS TOWARD INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN LIBERIA, REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO LOFA COUNTY AREA PROJECTS. TOLBERT SAID HE WAS VERY MINDFUL OF CONSTRAINTS ON US AID LEVELS IN CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION AND WAS ESPECIALLY APPRECIATIVE OF US EFFORTS IN LIGHT OF THESE REALITIES. HE HOPED, HOWEVER, THAT US WOULD CONTINUE TO BE RESPONSIVE TO HIS COUNTRY'S NEEDS, ESPECIALLY IN THE FIELD OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

7. US INVESTMENT: DAVIS THANKED TOLBERT FOR LIBERIA'S WELCOMING ATTITUDE TOWARD US INVESTMENT, NOTING THAT LIBERIA'S STABILITY ENHANCED ITS ATTRACTION FOR INVESTORS. TOLBERT RESPONDED THAT US INVESTORS HAD BEEN QTE MOST USEFUL UNQTE TO LIBERIA AND THAT HE HOPED THAT NEW INVESTORS WOULD COME AND ESPECIALLY THAT THOSE ALREADY PRESENT WOULD EXPAND THEIR PRESENCE.

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8. PRESIDENT TOLBERT CLOSED MEETING BY EXPRESSING HIS SATISFACTION THAT LIBERIA HAD BEEN NEW ASSISTANT SECRETARY'S FIRST RPT FIRST STOP IN AFRICA. HE SAID HE SAW HIMSELF AND DAVIS AS CUSTODIANS OF BINDING TIE BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES WHICH MUST BE PERPETUATED, EVEN THROUGH INDIVIDUALS MIGHT COME AND GO. MANFULL

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